Consultancy: Midterm Review of the Strategic Partnership Framework 2017-2020 (SPFII) between the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)

Location: Home based with a mission to New York, USA
Type of Contract: Special Service Agreement
Level: International Consultant

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE
UN-Women, grounded in the vision of equality enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, works for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls; the empowerment of women; and the achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action and peace and security.

The UN-Women founding resolution (GA resolution 64/289) and its Strategic Plan commit the organization to support countries to advance implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security, including resolutions 1325 (2000), 2122 (2013) and 2242 (2015) which recognizes UN-Women's role on women, peace and security coordination and accountability, as well as to support The Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

UN-Women implements the Strategic Partnership Framework (SPFII) through funding provided by the Government of Sweden through the Swedish Development Agency (Sida). The objective of the SPFII is to support the organization to effectively implement the UN Women Strategic Plan during the period 2017-2020, specifically targeting Output 4 *"More women of all ages fully participate, lead and engage in political institutions and processes."* and Outcome 5 *"Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and from humanitarian action."* and its related outputs[1]. The programme contributes towards achievement of several Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 5 on gender equality and SDG 16 on on peaceful and inclusive societies, and other gender related targets and indicators.

The Programme duration is 4 years starting on 1 January 2017 and ending on 31 December 2020 with an overall budget of SEK 320,000,000 (approximately US$35,700,000).

This is the phase II of the Programme, with Phase I (SPFI) being implemented in period December 2011 to December 2016. An independent external evaluation of the SPFI was conducted in 2016, findings of which were used to inform continuation of the Programme.

The SPFII is as a global programme implemented by three HQ teams (Women's Political Participation

---

[1] Output 13 *"More commitments on women, peace and security are implemented by Member States and the UN system, and more gender equality advocates influence peace and security processes"*, Output 14 *"More women play a greater role and are better served by humanitarian response and recovery services"* and Output 15 *"More women play a greater role and are better served by disaster risk management processes"*.

(WPP), Women Peace and Security (WPS) and Humanitarian Action (HA)) in coordination with UN-Women regional and country offices and contributes to the overall strengthening of UN-Women capacities in the three thematic areas (WPP, WPS, HA). A Programme Management Specialist in UN-Women's HQ Programme Support Management Unit (PSMU) provides the overall programme, operations and financial management coordination.

Within the framework of the SPFII, UN-Women is responsible for commissioning a mid-term review (MTR) of the programme to inform future programme orientation and implementation. UN-Women is seeking the services of an independent international consultant to conduct the SPFII MTR according to the objectives and scope detailed in Annex 1.

Duties and Responsibilities

The Consultant will conduct mid-term review of the SPFII with expected outputs and deliverables as detailed below.

Outputs and deliverables:
- Inception report with proposed MTR methodology, work plan and structure of the MTR report;
- A draft preliminary MTR report and presentation, to be presented at a debriefing meeting with UN-Women (SPFII Team);
- Final report that should include the following in its structure:
  o Executive Summary;
  o Introduction (including context, scope, methodology and limitations);
  o Key Strategic Findings and Conclusions;
  o Recommendations (corrective actions for on-going or future work, not more than 10);
  o Summary on challenges, lessons learned and best practices;
  o Annexes (list of interviewees, list of documents reviewed, etc.)

Timeframe:
- Desk review and inception report: 7 working days.
- Field work and Preliminary Report: 15 working days
- Final Report: 8 working days

The consultant cannot have participated in the programme preparation, formulation, and/or implementation and should not have a conflict of interest with programme related activities.

Competencies

Corporate Competencies:
- Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability
- Highest standards of integrity, discretion and loyalty
- Accountability
- Creative Problem Solving
- Effective Communication
- Inclusive Collaboration
- Stakeholder Engagement

Functional Competencies:

- Excellent knowledge of principles and methods of evaluation, particularly in the context of international development
- Demonstrated grasp and understanding of gender issues, in general, and preferably in the UN system
- Strong analytical skills, including ability to rapidly analyze and integrate diverse information with a discerning sense for quality of data
- Ability to work with multidisciplinary and multicultural teams
- Creativity, innovation and initiative
- Result oriented
- Ability of facilitation

Required Skills and Experience

Education:

- Master's degree or equivalent in social sciences, human rights, gender/women's studies, international development, or a related field is required

Experience:

- At least 10 years of experience in gender programming, monitoring and/or evaluation in the UN and/or international development. Familiarity with UN Women and its programme evaluation a plus.
- Recent experience with result-based management evaluation methodologies
- Experience in gender sensitive evaluation

Language:

- Full proficiency in English (written and spoken).

Annex I

MTR OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The MTR will assess progress towards the achievement of results as specified in the Results Framework of the Programme as well as the initial and potential impacts of the programme. The review will assess early signs of success or failure with the goal of identifying the necessary changes to be made to set the programme on-track to achieve its intended results. The MTR will review the strategy and risks to sustainability as well as identify lessons learnt and best practices which could be applied to future and other on-going programmes.

The MTR will assess the following four categories of programme progress.

i. Programme Strategy
Programme design:
- Review if lessons from phase I of the programme (SPFI) were properly incorporated into the programme design.
- Review the relevance of the implementation strategy and assess whether it provides the most effective route towards expected results.
- Review how does the programme addresses UN-Women's triple mandate.
- Review if there are clear baselines indicators and/or benchmark for performance? How are these being used in programme management?
- Review if there is a systematic approach to leaving no one behind (LNOB) and if not, provide specific recommendations for capturing LNOB information within the existing performance monitoring framework.

ii. Progress Towards Results
Progress Towards Outcomes/Outputs Analysis:
- Review the Log-frame indicators against progress made towards the targets using the Progress Towards Results Matrix[2] and make recommendations from the areas marked as "Not on target" (red).
- Identify key barriers to achieving the programme objectives in the remainder of the implementation timeframe.
- By reviewing the aspects of the programme that have already been successful, identify good practices and upscaling opportunities.

iii. Programme Implementation and Management
Management Arrangements:
- Review overall effectiveness of programme management and governance structure. Are responsibilities and reporting lines clear? Is decision-making transparent and undertaken in a timely manner? Recommend areas for improvement.
- Review the coordination mechanisms between the three thematic teams in HQs as well as the implementation arrangements/relationship with the field offices and outline good practices and recommend areas for improvement.

---

[2] available as part of the UN Women annual report

Work Planning:
- Review any delays in programme start-up and implementation, identify the causes, and examine if they have been resolved.
- Examine the use of the results framework/log-frame as a management tool and review any changes made to it since programme start.

Finance:
- Does the programme have the appropriate financial controls, including reporting and planning, that allow management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allow for timely flow of funds?

Programme-level Monitoring and Evaluation Systems:
- Review the monitoring tools currently being used: Do they provide the necessary information? Do they involve field offices? Are they efficient? Are additional tools required? How could they be made more participatory and inclusive?
- Examine the financial management of the monitoring and evaluation budget. Are sufficient resources being allocated to monitoring and evaluation?

Stakeholder Engagement:
- Has the programme enabled and/or leveraged strategic partnerships with relevant stakeholders at global regional and country levels?
- Has the programme contributed to advance UN Women's coordination mandate on each of the three thematic areas, both at global policy and country programming levels?

Reporting:
- Assess how the SPFII Programme Team and partners undertake and fulfil UN Women reporting requirements (internal and external).

Communications:
- Review internal programme communication with stakeholders: Is communication regular and effective? Are there key stakeholders left out of communication? Does this communication with stakeholders contribute to their awareness of outcomes and activities and investment in the sustainability of programme results?
- Review external programme communication: Are proper means of communication established or being established to express the programme progress and intended impact?

iv. Sustainability
- Validate whether the risks identified in the Risk Matrix are the most important and whether the risk ratings applied are appropriate and up to date. If not, explain why.
- In addition, assess the following risks to sustainability.

Financial risks to sustainability:

- What is the likelihood of financial resources not being available once the SPFII funding ends (consider potential resources from multiple sources that will be adequate for sustaining programme's outcomes)

Socio-economic risks to sustainability:
- Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of programme outcomes?

Institutional Framework and Governance risks to sustainability:
- Do the legal framework, governance structure and processes pose risks that may jeopardize sustainability of programme benefits? Are required systems for accountability, transparency, and technical knowledge transfer in place?

Conclusions & Recommendations:
The MTR consultant will include a section of the report setting out the MTR's evidence-based conclusions, in light of the findings. Recommendations (not more than 10) should be succinct suggestions for critical intervention that are specific, measurable, achievable, and relevant. A recommendation table should be put in the report's executive summary.

MTR APPROACH & METHODOLOGY
The MTR must provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful.
The MTR will adhere to the principles established in Evaluation Policies of UN Women and the UN Evaluation Group's Norms and Standards for Evaluation. These should include but are not limited to: independence, impartiality, transparency, ethics, partnerships, credibility and utility. Mixed methods, both qualitative and quantitative, should be used to collect data and gather evidence.
The MTR consultant will review all relevant sources of information (listed below) and any other materials considered useful for this evidence-based review. The MTR consultant is expected to follow a collaborative and participatory approach ensuring close engagement with the UN-Women SPFII Team, Project Board, the UN-Women Offices supported through the programme, UN-Women HQ and Regional Technical Advisers, and other key stakeholders.
The final MTR report should describe the MTR approach taken and the rationale for the approach making explicit the underlying assumptions, challenges, strengths and weaknesses about the methods and approach of the review.

List of Documents to be reviewed by the MTR consultant:
- SPFII Programme Framework document
- SPFII Log Frame
- SPFII Annual Report 2017 including Progress of Indicators matrix
- SPFII Risk Matrix
- Quarterly monitoring from Result Management System (RMS)
- SPFII Annual Work Plans including a brief of strategic direction
- Oversight mission reports for thematic areas (where applicable)
- All monitoring reports prepared by the project
- Minutes of annual session with the donor

The following documents will also be available:
- UN-Women Programme and operational manual
- UN-Women Strategic Plan 2014-2017; and UN-Women Strategic Plan 2018-2021 including Theory of Change for relevant priority areas
- Evaluation of the SPFI including status of implementation of agreed recommendations
- UN-Women corporate evaluations for thematic areas covered by the SPF

MTR ARRANGEMENTS

The principal responsibility for managing this MTR resides with the Commissioning Unit - Programme Support Management Unit (PSMU). The SPFII Programme Team and Programme Management Specialist will be responsible for liaising with the MTR consultant to provide all relevant documents and set up stakeholder interviews.